

Following a Family's Bullish Tradition Her Way

By Brad Stager

When Michelle Morency graduated in May with her bachelor of science in mechanical engineering, she became the latest of several family members to become a USF alumnus.

"I kind of have a family legacy at USF," says Morency. "My grandmother went to USF to get her bachelors of education degree, and my dad went to the College of Engineering and studied computer engineering. My dad's brother studied electrical engineering and I have two older brothers and when it came time for them to go to college they went to USF, one for finance and one for electrical engineering." She also cites scholarships that USF offered as "making it the best choice."

It might be easy to get lost in a herd of accomplished USF Bulls from the same family, but Morency stands out with her achievements, which include selection as the Mechanical Engineering Department spring 2017 Outstanding Graduate, and receiving First Place in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) International Undergraduate Research and Design Expo's poster competition at the 2016 International Mechanical Engineering Congress and Exposition (IMECE) conference.

Her poster, "Efficient Dialysis Methods for Processing Regenerated Silk Films," presented research she conducted while participating in the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. She says presenting her work and having it recognized by ASME validated her academic and professional sense of purpose.

"It was an amazing feeling and that was probably my biggest accomplishment."

Morency was also active in USF student organizations, serving on the executive board of ASME at USF as its Activities Chair, Vice Chair and Chair. She says that kind of leadership experience is important in developing confidence and communication skills that are vital to working in the engineering field.

“It forced me into positions where I had to talk to professors about topics not related to class and speaking to people I was originally intimidated by. I was able to build solid, professional relationships with professors and advisors.”

She also spent a semester studying mechanical engineering at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, England as part of USF’s Education Abroad program, played on the USF club tennis team and was Concertmaster (first chair, first violin) of the USF Honors Orchestra.

Exposure to science and technology subjects in high school helped guide Morency toward the College of Engineering’s mechanical engineering program.

“Some of the topics I learned in high school were related to mechanical engineering, so when I looked at the flowchart for mechanical engineering I saw topics I was familiar with and knew I enjoyed, like thermodynamics and kinematics.”

Using her knowledge and skills to promote sustainability in manufacturing processes and machine design is high on Morency’s career agenda.

“I really care about the environment so I started to think about how I could have a career looking at how things are made and how they fail, and after something fails how it could be reused, recycled or remanufactured,” says Morency, who is currently working as an engineering aide at Lockheed Martin and will return to England to earn her master’s degree in Industrial Systems, Manufacturing and Management at the University of Cambridge.

Besides laying the groundwork for a successful engineering career, Morency has devoted much of her life to music. Besides performing with the USF Honors Orchestra, she plays violin at her church and pursues her own musical identity.

“I like to sing and write songs,” she says. You can hear some of her original compositions such as “Wholehearted” and “Good Things” at www.soundcloud.com/michelle-morency.

Morency credits the accomplishments she has achieved so far, and hopes in the future to fulfill the words of encouragement she posted on her wall, and wants to share with others:

“Always Remember: Work Hard and You Will Get There.”